

COMMISSION ON AGING AND RETIREMENT EDUCATION

Senior MOMENTUM



VOLUME 2, ISSUE 6

Helping Older Adults Live Better in Baltimore... One day at a Time!

DECEMBER 2005

Director's message



John P. Stewart
Executive Director

Greetings,

On October 6, the Commission on Aging and Retirement Education (CARE) received a request from the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging for volunteers to go to the areas in southeast Texas that were devastated by Hurricane Rita. Two case managers

from CARE's Medicaid Waiver for Older Adults Unit, Megan Heaton and Molly Bittner, volunteered to go to Texas. On Sunday, October 9, Ms. Heaton and Ms. Bittner were flown to Beaumont, Texas, where they remained for 10 days serving the areas special needs population and older adults age 60 and over.



CARE workers Molly Bittner and Megan Heaton helped seniors in Texas after Hurricane Rita.

Upon arrival, Ms. Heaton and Ms. Bittner were greeted by local staff and were introduced to four additional team members from Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) in Iowa, Boston, Maryland, and Northern Texas. Accommodations were made for the group at a local hotel, which also served as the Emergency Operations Command Center. The

next day, the team arrived at the Southeast Texas Regional Planning Commission, which housed the AAA. They were instructed about the scope of Hurricane Rita, which had been a Category 5 storm. Several areas were hit very hard by the hurricane. One area in particular, Sabine Pass, had over 95 percent of the homes destroyed. The case managers were provided with lists of seniors who needed to be contacted, and their daunting challenge began.

Over the next nine days, Ms. Heaton and Ms. Bittner attempted to contact 151 people in a tri-county area (Hardin, Orange and Jefferson Counties) using a variety of methods such as phone calls, home visits and information tables. They were able to meet with 41 individuals and assist with closing 200 cases by the end of the trip. Many of the seniors/special needs population had similar needs: 62 percent needed assistance with removing trees and tarping roofs, while 19 percent needed help with removing mold. Other needs identified included food, water, medication assistance, and housing (many apartment complexes had been con-

Medicare Schedule

The Baltimore City Commission on Aging and Retirement Education's (CARE) Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) will be assisting persons with Medicare to review and enroll in a Medicare prescription drug plan beginning Wednesday, November 16 at local senior centers.

Check the schedule below and call the Center in your area to schedule an appointment.

You must bring your Medicare card, other health insurance, prescription coverage cards, and a list of the prescription drugs that you are currently taking.

BALTIMORE CITY CARE/SHIP MEDICARE D ENROLLMENT DAYS

LOCATION	PHONE #	DATES	DAY	TIME
CARE, 10 N. Calvert Suite 300, 21202	(410) 396-2273	Nov. 21, 05 thru May 12, 06	Mondays, Tuesdays Fridays	9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Waxter Sr. Ctr. 1000 Cathedral, 21201	(410) 396-1324	Nov. 17, 05 thru May 11, 06	Thursdays	9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Oliver Sr. Cntr. 1700 N. Gay, 21213	(410) 396-3861	Nov. 16, 05 thru May 10, 06	Wednesdays	9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Hatton Sr. Ctr. 2825 Fait Ave., 21224	(410) 396-9025	Nov. 21, 05 thru May 15, 06	Mondays	9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Sandtown Ctr. 1601 Baker St., 21225	(410) 396-7724	Nov. 17, 05 thru May 11, 06	Thursdays	9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Myerberg Ctr. 3101 Fallstaff, 21209	(410) 358-6856	Nov. 30, 05 thru May 10, 06	Wednesdays	9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Forest Park Ct 4801 Liberty Ht., 21207	(410) 466-2124	Nov. 17, 05 thru May 11, 06	Thursdays	9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Senior NetWork 5828 York Rd., 21212	(410) 323-7131	Dec. 1, 05 thru May 11, 06	Thursdays	12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.



Texas home damaged by Hurricane Rita.

demned, so their residents were evicted).

Ms. Heaton and Ms. Bittner report that the experience was extremely rewarding. Several vital lessons were learned — most importantly, the need to be prepared should a disaster strike close to home. Molly Bittner reflects, "This was the most emotionally draining, but rewarding experience I've ever had." Megan Heaton shared that "It was an eye opening experience that enabled me to be grateful for what I have at home." CARE is honored to have these two ladies on staff and thanks them for caring enough to be deployed to Texas to assist in efforts to provide

support and relief.

I also want to let you know about a new program that could help older adults in the event of an emergency and keep them informed about extreme weather conditions. The Baltimore City Senior Citizens Emergency Response Network (SCERN), created in July of this year, was established to identify and alert older Baltimoreans about the devastating affects of extreme heat conditions during the months of July and August. During those two months, CARE called older adults with tips on how to safeguard themselves during the heat wave, and gave out fans and air conditioners to help older Baltimoreans.

CARE is expanding SCERN into a response and outreach system to contact older Baltimoreans in the event of any emergency. We are also working with Baltimore City's Office of Emergency Management to develop a comprehensive city plan to identify isolated, vulnerable populations.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December events

2nd • 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Hearing the Caregiver - Training sessions will be provided at Harbor Hospital Center, The Life Resource Center, 2990 South Hanover Street, Baltimore, for professionals and advocates serving older adults and families to better assess and support the needs of caregivers. **Featured Topics:** *Care Communities* - Diana Rein, M.S.W.; *Hospice and Palliative Care Options* - Ayanna Williams, R.N. Grant Program Manager; *Care-giver Resources* - Jose Jimenez, M.P.H.; *Caring for Yourself* - Joann Autry, Executive Assistant, Gov. Robert L. Ehrlich's office; *Community Resources* - Elouise Mayne, R.N., Division Chief, Community Services, CARE. For more information, contact Jose Jimenez at CARE 410-396-4932

3rd •

Silent Auction & Celtic Concert: On Saturday we will be having our silent auction with gift certificates from Bill Bateman's, Center Stage, BSO, Peppermill, Everyman Theatre, Gertrude's and BMA, Aquarium, Passport, Panera Bread, and Fine Jewelry, wine glasses with wine, original art work, and much more. The concert and appetizers are FREE. Call Senior Network of North Baltimore at 410-323-7131 with any questions.

29th • 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Pre New Year's Gala: Thursday at Martin's West Dress To Impress! Price: \$35 per person - Transportation included in ticket price. Cash Bar. \$5 deposit required to reserve seat. Transportation must be reserved in advance. Payment due in full by December 9 - No Refunds after December 9. For more information contact Karen Wheeler, Oliver Senior Center 410-396-3861 / Annette Butler, Waxter Senior Center 410-396-1324 / Joanne Cason, Department of Recreation and Parks 410-396-2920.

ON THE ROAD WITH SENIOR NETWORK OF NORTH BALTIMORE

Join us on one of our upcoming trips:
Dec. 8, 2005 - *Sight & Sound*;
March 2006 - *Jekyll Island/Savannah*;
Sept. 17 - 21 2006 - *New Hampshire
Lakes & Mountains Tour*;
Nov. 9 - 18 2006 - *Hawaii Cruise*.
Call Mary at 410-323-7131 for details.
All trips are reasonably priced.

Senior MOMENTUM

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Chase Away the Holiday Blues

Submitted by Deborah Hamilton

According to the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, about 15 percent of Americans over 65 suffer from depression. Many older adults find it more difficult to cope during the holiday season. Failing health, residing in a long term care facility, financial constraints, separation from family, and remembering those who have passed on are factors that can aggravate depression, especially during the holiday season.



• Help your older friends and relatives cope with feelings of isolation by telephoning or e-mailing them frequently to share your

routine holiday activities.

• Give an early holiday gift certificate for a group art activity, a membership to their local senior



center, a membership to the local Y, or a trip to a day spa.



• Help an older adult with vision problems cope with depression by typing address labels for their holiday cards. Sending greetings to friends, neigh-

bors, relatives and former business associates during the holiday season will increase their likelihood of receiving unexpected calls and visits!

• Encourage financially strapped older adults to give of themselves rather than their money. Encourage them to give promises of babysitting, baking services or chaperone field trips and sporting events that working parents are unable to attend.



Resources to address depression:

1. Call Commission on Aging & Retirement Education to find the location of senior centers in your area: 410-396-4932
2. First Call for Help 410-685-0525
3. Baltimore Crisis Response Hotline 410-752-2272
4. Harford Belair Mental Health Center 410-426-5650
5. Jewish Family Services 410-466-9200
6. Baltimore Mental Health Systems 410-837-2647
7. North Baltimore Center 410-366-4360
8. National Mental Health Association at www.nmha.org

CARE Volunteers Honored by City of Baltimore

Ms. Marci Buchman and Ms. Gwendolyn Johnson, two of CARE'S long-term volunteers, received citations and accolades from Mayor Martin O'Malley during the Maryland's Most Beautiful People Community Service Awards ceremony on October 20.

Marci Buchman was nominated for her hard work as an Information and Assistance counselor in CARE's Call Center. She has been a volunteer with CARE for almost 10 years.

Gwendolyn Johnson was nominated for her work on the Baltimore City's Human Service Commission. Ms. Johnson has been a member since 1974 and is known as the Mayor of Cherry Hill for all of her activism toward improving the quality of life of that neighborhood's residents. Ms. Johnson is also employed by CARE, responding to constituent's calls and concerns.

Annual Senior Health and Fitness Day a Success!!!

Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks, in conjunction with CARE, held a very successful fourth annual Senior Health and Fitness Day on October 28. This year's event featured a flu shot clinic and provided almost four hundred flu and pneumonia shots to local seniors.

Also in attendance and crowd pleasers were the Oriole Bird and Ms. Senior Maryland America 2005 Dr. Mabel Lake Murray. Older adults benefited from health screenings and other information from 20 local organizations and businesses. Lunch was provided by Giant and pedometers by University of Maryland Medical Systems. CARE thanks them for their support.